

SCENIC ROUTE ELEMENT

GRIDLEY GENERAL PLAN

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August, 1974

Adopted by Resolution No. 48 (1974 Series)
October 7, 1974

City Council
of the
City of Gridley



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I. INTRODUCTION AND POLICY

Due to a combination of circumstances, including, topography, soil, climate and historical development, the Gridley planning area is blessed with a landscape comprised of a small service center surrounded by orchards, cultivated fields and vacant land which are as yet relatively unencumbered by the spectre of urban development as compared to other parts of California. The planning area is crisscrossed by traffic circulation routes of city, county and state jurisdiction which convey to the traveler the appearance and character of the community through which he passes. Indirectly, these visible areas set aesthetic standards for community development by providing a sense of natural order to the landscape and by providing relief from distractions of urban development.

Unfortunatley, as a result of being traversed by these same traffic ways, the adjacent roadside areas are deemed valuable for the economic advantages inherent in their location, and therefore, are subject to pressure for development for the opportunity provided by this special advantage.

The Scenic Route Element of the Gridley General Plan is adopted by the City to designate, establish, develop, and protect those circulation routes and adjacent scenic areas within the planning area, which through a variety of factors are deemed worthy of being maintained in a scenic state by the citizens of the community. The provisions of

this element are not solely limited to those circulation routes under state jurisdiction, but apply to all streets, roads and highways of the transportation network of the community, no matter how large or small.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Essentially, it is the purpose of the Scenic Route Element to coordinate the actions of the various levels of government, which through the lead of a local agency, scenic routes may be established; and the aesthetic qualities of these routes and the areas visable from them can be protected and enhanced in order to acheive the following goals for the community:

1. Provide areas of pleasing appearance to the community and to its visitors
2. Preserve and enhance the natural environment through protection of open space areas.
3. Break the monotony of continuous development.
4. Provide an alternative to development in areas of high noise levels caused by traffic
5. Prevent strip commerical development
6. Provide safe, economical and efficient transportation routes as part of the local and national transportation network by the prevention and removal of distractions
7. Discourage insensitive and unsightly development
8. Increase community pride
9. Provide a variety of terrain and landscape within the urban area
10. Protect agricultural areas from parcelization and urban encroachment for the continued availability of land for agriculture

III. TYPES OF SCENIC ROUTES

For the purpose of this element, the following categories of routes are considered to be eligible for the designation "Scenic Route":

1. Official State Scenic Highway
2. Official County Scenic Highway
3. Rural Designated Scenic Road
4. Urban Designated Scenic Street
5. Scenic Biketrail

Each of these routes should be considered on its own merits for inclusion into the area scenic route system, however, for inclusion, each of these routes must at a minimum, offer a view of a scenic corridor -- the visable land area outside the right-of-way and generally described as "the view from the road".

Official State Scenic Highways are officially designated scenic highways by the Scenic Highways Advisory Committee of the State of California after application by local agencies and only if on a list of eligible highways found in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code. At the present time Highway 99 is not on the eligibility list.

Official County Scenic Highways are county roads which if the meet the minimum standards prescribed for official scenic highways may be so designated by the county upon approval of the State. A Rural Designated Scenic Road is a route that traverses a defined corridor within which natural scenic resources and aesthetic values are protected and enhanced. An Urban Designated Scenic Street is a route that traverses a defined visual corridor which offers an unhindered view of attractive or unique urban scenes. A Scenic Bikeway is a route designed to lead the individual through a scenic corridor by a more personal mode of transportation, the bicycle.

One other classification which is not listed in the categories outlined above is a "landscaped freeway" as defined under Section 5216 of Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Business and Professions Code. A "landscaped freeway" is a section or sections of a freeway which is now, or hereafter may be, improved by the planting at least one side of the freeway right-of-way in lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers, or other ornamental vegetation which shall require reasonable maintenance. The incorporation of this classification into a sign ordinance would be useful in control of nonappurtenent signs.

The basic difference between a landscaped freeway and a scenic route is the extent of application. A landscaped freeway is confined to the official right-of-way other than for minor aesthetic provisions, whereas a scenic route encompasses a scenic corridor, the area visable from and outside of the right-of-way.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

The State has mandated that before any route may be designated an Official State or Official County Scenic Highway, the local agency must take such action as necessary to protect the "scenic corridor" through various methods including, but not limited to:

1. Regulation of land use and density of development
2. Detailed land and site planning
3. Control of outdoor advertising
4. Careful attention to and control of earth moving and landscaping
5. Design and appearance of structures and equipment

These methods may be implemented by some or all of the following means:

1. Zoning regulations
 - a. Increased setbacks
 - b. Height limitations
 - c. Site plan review
 - d. Special districts
 - e. Restricted uses and lowered densities.
 - f. Sign control
2. Specific development plans
3. Subdivision regulations
 - a. Street design
 - b. Grading limitations
 - c. Fill limitations
 - d. Slope controls
 - e. Tree planting or preservation.
 - f. Utility undergrounding
 - g. Land dedication
4. Land acquisition
 - a. Open space easements
 - b. Purchase of property
 - c. Purchase of development rights

5. Building code
6. Architecture controls
7. Maintenance measures
 - a. Fire prevention
 - b. Housing code
 - c. Litter control
 - d. Weed and insect control
8. Landscaping

Within the visable area of the scenic route, the following uses should be considered compatible with the concept of scenic routes with proper controls and planning:

1. Agriculture
2. Vista points
3. Rest stops
4. Natural areas
5. Parks
6. Landscaping
7. Outdoor recreation facilities
8. Historical sites
9. Reservoirs
10. Traffic control devices
11. Route designation signs

V. ROUTE STANDARDS

Standards for identifying and designating scenic routes should include the following considerations:

1. A well defined scenic corridor
2. Quality in scenic view of natural, improved or historic areas
3. A variety of terrain and landscape
4. Conformance with open space and conservation objectives
5. Accessibility between areas of recreation, parks, or historic interest
6. Routes of adequate design and safety
7. Control of development within the scenic corridor
8. Non-compatible land uses to be screened or re-located
9. Supplement the land use and circulation elements of the General Plan
10. Practical coordination with other levels of government for cross jurisdictional development.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Until such time that the State designates Highway 99 as being eligible for an Official State Scenic Highway, it is recommended that the primary focus of community efforts in the area of scenic routes be directed to establishment of the following roads as Official County Scenic Highways within and outside of the planning area for the protection of agriculture and prevention of urban sprawl:

1. Ord Ranch Road
2. Gridley Colusa Highway
3. West Biggs Gridley Road

Other minor scenic routes may be designated at such time that their inclusion into the program is warranted through need of the extra protection that may be afforded through such a route management program.

It is further recommended, that it be the policy of the City to advocate the designation of the proposed freeway bypass at a minimum as a "landscaped freeway" and preferably as an Official State Scenic Highway.

Sources Consulted

Lampman and Associates, Oroville General Plan, 1973.

Shasta County, Scenic Highway Element, 1972.

State of California, Council on Intergovernmental Relations,
General Plan Guidelines, Sacramento, California,
September, 1973.

State of California, Streets and Highways Code, Division 1,
Chapter 1, Article 3, Section 154.

State of California, Streets and Highways Code, Division 1,
Chapter 2, Article 2.5, Sections 260-263.